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NEGLECTED REALITIES IN THE FAR EAST¹

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THE United States faces two problems in the Far East. The first and immediate one concerns our relations with Japan; the second and larger one, our relations with China and ultimately with India. Many sober and well-informed persons believe them both insoluble except by force of arms. I dissent completely from this view, and I shall try in this paper to indicate some neglected features of the situation that in my judgment offer to a right-minded American diplomacy a means of maintaining friendly and mutually helpful relationships with the people on the farther shores of the Pacific. The Japanese problem is only the vestibule to the larger and more distant Chinese and Indian question. If we can justly and successfully deal with the perplexing realities fronting us in regard to Japanese immigration into the United States and Japanese-American trade and investment rivalries in China, we can count on invaluable Japanese co-operation in solving what may well be the greatest political problem of this and the next century—the adjustment of relations between East and West during the years when western industrial methods, western political organization and western ways of thinking and acting shall make themselves effectively felt in the life of the seven hundred million people of China and India, as they are already beginning in some measure to do, and as they have already suddenly and dramatically done in Japan. If I discuss chiefly our relations with Japan, then, it will be because those relations involve the whole eastern field.

I believe that it is possible for the United States permanently to enjoy peace and friendship in the Far East—on the

¹ Address delivered at the National Conference on Foreign Relations of the United States, held under the auspices of the Academy of Political Science, at Long Beach, N. Y., May 31, 1917.

basis of one indispensable condition: We must abandon the dream of white supremacy. We must look forward, not grudgingly but gladly, to a free, self-governing, equal Asia, must aid whole-heartedly in every effort to bring such an Asia into being. This does not necessarily involve throwing overboard every restriction on Japanese or Chinese immigration, for example, but it does involve abandoning discrimination against orientals just because they are orientals. It does involve recognizing that we have no mission to rule Asia. Democracy is not to be dammed back within the confines of the Caucasian race. Do or do not the American people believe in democracy for the world? Despite all manifestations to the contrary, I believe that they do, down at bottom. Because I so believe, and only because I so believe, I am hopeful of our helping the world solve the problem of relations between East and West. The West has had to make concessions to the national spirit of Japan; it will have to make concessions to the rising national spirit of China and India. Let our democracy be as big as the world; none other can meet our need.

Foreign policy, though guided by ideals, must be built on realities. In the eastern situation there are two classes of realities. The facts that make for conflict lie evident on the surface; for a decade they have been emphasized by American journalists and other writers on the Orient. They include, first, the dense population and the limited natural resources of Japan, causing, under stimulus of western example, an irresistible push toward expansion and colonization. Over against these facts stand, second, the rich resources of China, together with the present political and military weakness of that country. Third, we see the selfish struggle of rival concession-hunting capitalist groups in China, each backed by its own government with diplomatic and ultimately military and naval pressure. Hence, we are told, the survival of the greedy backed by the biggest guns. These commercial motives, whose operation, if unchecked, would seem almost certainly destined to bring the western nations into armed conflict first with Japan, and later with China and India, are furthermore being strongly reinforced, in the fourth place, by race prejudice. Repressive

British rule in India, foreign contempt of Chinese rights and susceptibilities in China, American, Canadian and Australian discrimination against Japanese and other orientals, and wanton insult of individuals justly proud of their race and lineage—all evidences of contempt for the oriental, of determination to pursue western aims regardless of eastern desires, are unquestionably strengthening the forces making for conflict.

These things are realities. No one can afford to neglect them. Small wonder that many sober and well-informed students fear an eastern war in consequence, and specifically warn the United States to make ready its military and naval power against the day of supposedly inevitable conflict with Japan as the earliest representative of the East. If these be all the facts in the situation, such students are right; but these are not all the facts, not even the most important ones for a statesmanship that has faith and imagination as well as ability to see. What, then, are the other realities on which a democratic statesmanship can build a policy of peace and prosperity in the Far East?

First and foremost is the growth of democracy in the Orient. Liberalism in Japan, republicanism in China, and nationalism in India—all are manifestations of the same force. Yuan Shi'h Kai, astute statesman though he was, failed to reckon with the movement in China, and his power crumbled. China will not go backward. The more far-seeing of the British rulers of India see the handwriting on the wall and urge concessions there. But most immediately significant, because in some ways most advanced, is the growth of Japanese liberalism.

The notion has been sedulously cultivated in the United States that the Japanese people, so far as they are interested in politics, are a unit in support of forcible imperialistic expansion. This is absolutely contrary to the fact. A large and influential group of merchants, manufacturers and financiers realize that the expansion of markets so eagerly desired cannot be attained by mere political conquest, but must be secured through the friendship of customers to be. Japan's demands on China in 1915 represented the culmination of a forward policy bitterly and properly resented by the Chinese. What is not realized here is that these demands were sharply criti-

cized in Japan also, not only by the political opponents of the Okuma government, but by commercial leaders and disinterested students of public affairs. The demands have always been regarded in wide circles there as wrong and mistaken. The overthrow of the Okuma cabinet and the calling of Count Terauchi to be prime minister was widely heralded in our press as meaning an intensification of the pressure on China and a further development of militaristic coercion. As a matter of fact, the Terauchi administration has made a complete about-face in Chinese policy and has set itself the task of winning the good-will of the Chinese government and people. It is not necessary for my purpose to assume that this has been done from other than selfish motives. Superficial appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, I am assured by at least one competent observer that imperialism and liberalism in Japan are even now so nicely balanced as to make it not altogether easy there to carry out a policy of unqualified coercion in China, even with the attention of the rest of the world more or less diverted by the European struggle.

Japanese liberalism rests back in this matter upon a second reality that is constantly forgotten—the genuine and general desire of the Japanese people and government for peace. The man who represents any considerable section of Japanese opinion as other than earnestly desirous of peace with the United States and the rest of the world is either misinformed or worse. This is not to say that the Japanese would not fight under certain easily conceivable circumstances; but governing classes, business men and common people alike realize the disadvantages of war and earnestly desire to avoid it. Japan's financial situation will for a long time to come make the problem of financing a war extremely difficult. Her rapidly growing manufacturing and commercial interests would suffer greatly from an armed contest, which would bring but doubtful benefits even to her financiers. Her common people, already loaded with taxes, and her socially minded officials, busy with the difficult tasks of improving sanitation and education and raising living standards, have no desire to see their work made harder by the burdens and losses of a war, even a successful

one. Despite alarmist reports to the contrary, we may be perfectly well assured that Japan is not going to war if she can help it, and it is becoming progressively less probable that she will feel herself unable to avoid it.

For, a third neglected reality is the change in the eastern situation that is lessening the fears of Japan. The glacier-like southeastward movement of Russia and the scramble of European states for pieces of China created an apprehension in Japan that was no small element in causing her aggressive forward movement. Since the signing of the Russo-Japanese treaty Japan has been relieved of the imminent fear of farther Russian advance; and today, like all the world, she stands face to face with the wonder of a new free Russia. The peace conference at the end of the present war may well bring an adjustment of Chinese affairs that will free Japan from the fear of renewed aggression in China by other European powers. Only let the United States at that conference come forward in frank and friendly manner, making clear the willingness of our business men to work with anybody and everybody in the economic development of China on terms laid down by the Chinese, and Japanese and Chinese fears alike will be largely put to rest. Then—and this point I would emphasize—the liberal element in Japanese foreign policy will have far freer scope than was ever before possible. In any case, the situation shows distinct and cheering improvement at this point, and our opportunity for a policy of constructive friendship is correspondingly enlarged.

In the fourth place, as regards Japanese-American trade and investment rivalries in China, so frequently alleged as a cause of inevitable conflict, it is a fact that competition does exist, but it is constantly forgotten that the Japanese eagerly desire American co-operation. Baron Shibusawa's visit to this country in 1916 gave evidence of that desire on the part of Japan, and suggested the Japanese idea of the form of co-operation. The exact mode of such joint action suggested by the Japanese may not meet the approval of our bankers, but only a blind and stupid financier or statesman would fail to take account of the Japanese desire in laying his plans for the future. There

exists today an extensive and substantial mutuality of business interests between Japan and the United States. Japanese merchants, manufacturers and statesmen recognize that the great natural resources and abundant capital of the United States naturally complement the dense population and relative poverty of Japan, and that citizens of the two countries can advantageously work together in the great task of the economic development of the East. Business co-operation between Chinese, Japanese and Americans, I am persuaded, never offered a more hopeful field for the development of mutual understanding and friendship than at the present time, when old difficulties are in process of being removed. American business leaders, happily, give some evidence of seeing the opportunity.

A fifth reality on which we may confidently reckon is the intelligence of Japanese statesmanship. Those who guide the new Japan have never been charged with a lack of knowledge of their own interest or a want of long-headedness in pursuing it. Now it so happens that if the western nations do not make territorial aggression on China, and do not use their political and diplomatic power to gain exclusive economic privileges for their own subjects, the Japanese stand to gain most of any people by a policy of equal opportunity. The Japanese recognize this fact. We may safely reckon that no responsible statesman in Japan will voluntarily, at any rate wantonly, do anything to stir up Chinese hostility. Furthermore, the desire for American co-operation in the development of China makes it certain that nothing will be done needlessly to offend America and Americans.

The course of Japanese statesmanship since the Russian war will undoubtedly be cited as belying this view. Japan's course in Manchuria and the forward policy pursued in China after the opening of the European war have frequently been regarded as indicating a blindness to all other considerations than the gains to be made by a ruthless exercise of political and military pressure. I do not desire in any way to defend the course of Japan in these matters, and especially in the negotiations connected with the demands of 1915, which can-

not in my judgment be defended even from the Japanese point of view. Is it not possible, however, that Japanese statesmen at that time reverted for the time being to the older oriental methods of diplomacy and asked for a great deal more than they expected to get, in order to have material for bargaining? Whether this be so or not, we should remember that the demands of group five are laid on the shelf, and there is no immediate prospect that they will again be placed on the counter. In addition, as previously indicated, the Terauchi government has adopted a friendly and conciliatory attitude toward China, and is apparently doing everything it can to make up for the errors of its predecessors in creating both in China and throughout the rest of the world an unfavorable opinion concerning Japan's course in China. A Japanese correspondent of the *New York Tribune* has recently said:

The world apparently does not yet realize the significance of the new Japanese policy toward China. Today Japan is saying to China: "There is one and only one way to save ourselves. That is for China and Japan to stand together through thick and thin. . . . After the great war in Europe none of us can tell just what will happen in the economic conditions of the world. China and Japan must stand or fall together." . . .

Does this mean then the old rheumy skeleton of "Asia for the Asiatic" coming back to life again? It would mean that perhaps if Japan did not have a few other considerations to consider. . . . Japan cannot afford to throw the American market overboard to hog the Chinese market. . . . Her interests lie rather in the direction of co-operation with American finance. This she sees clearly. She is eager to go hand in hand with the American interests in the work of developing the resources of China. Moreover there is another consideration besides the American dollar. In the language of Baron Goto, who is the brain and the main dynamo of the Terauchi cabinet:

"The era of the Pacific promises to surpass that of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic. All the forces of the West and the East will meet. Will they unite or clash? I believe it lies in the power of the United States and Japan to answer that question on which the future happiness and progress of the world will depend. For this reason the relations between Japan and the United States are

of supreme importance. . . . I hope the two nations will find principles on which to base abiding relations of mutual trust and confidence."

Ideas such as these can scarcely be dismissed as mere newspaper propaganda. For my own part I prefer to reckon on the intelligence of Japanese statesmen as an important datum in the solution of our immediate Far Eastern problem rather than on the dreams of journalists beyond the Pacific terrified by the events of the past two decades into a belief that the Japanese are determined to have a war with somebody at any price. If newspaper correspondents and editorial writers will only stop talking war and thinking war in the Far East, if we Americans will honestly and earnestly take up the question of discrimination against Japanese and Chinese in our own country, in order to work out an equitable policy, and if we will approach the matter of trade and investment in China with a view to friendly co-operation with citizens of Japan and other states in furnishing the capital and the other means of economic development so earnestly desired by the leaders of the new China—if Americans will do these things, I am persuaded that we can count on the loyal aid of the Japanese; for Chinese, Japanese and American interests, except in the case of certain individual capitalist groups, are identical and not opposed, and Japanese statesmen see these facts perhaps even more clearly than we do.

I shall mention but two more of the intangible and neglected facts that have profound importance for any intelligent diplomacy. One is Chinese friendship for the United States and faith in American intentions. Throughout China there exists an eager desire for the investment of American capital, because Americans are not suspected of ulterior political motives. On the other hand, Japan, Russia, Great Britain, France, Germany—all unhappily rest under a cloud of too well-justified suspicion in view of their Chinese record. If the American people wish to capitalize Chinese friendship for the benefit of a few American capitalists, it will be an easy matter to put our diplomatic and naval resources behind doubtful concession hunters. If on the other hand we prefer to capitalize

Chinese friendship in the form of mutual benefits to the Chinese and the American people, the way lies open, and no insuperable obstacle stands in our path. The widely circulated report of Japanese government objection, for example, to the perfectly proper American concession of last year for railway-building in China was simply false. Our policy of relying on Chinese friendship for business opportunities has already won a measure of initial success. I am not afraid to trust such methods for the farther development of mutually profitable business relations, which in turn shall lead the Chinese to think of Americans as being genuinely their friends and not their exploiters.

Finally, true statesmanship will never lose sight of the real American sentiment in behalf of democracy and in favor of a republican China. Our failure to live up to our treaty obligations and our treatment of the Chinese as individuals give us little ground for pride or satisfaction; but it is a patent fact that we Americans do sympathize deeply with the idea of a Chinese republic, and that any diplomatic move looking toward the support of such a government will command overwhelming popular support here. In this state of public opinion American investors in the long run can probably count on government backing for those concessions only that do not touch Chinese political and administrative integrity. Concessions so limited mean gain to the Chinese people as well as to the concessionaires. The much criticized withdrawal of our support from the six-power loan group, and our later backing of American investments with no political strings attached, would appear to indicate that our government recognizes the importance of this last intangible reality.

If I regard the present far eastern situation, then, as one of hope, it is not because I do not recognize the facts that make it full of perplexity and danger, for no candid man can deny them. On the other hand, I am hopeful because I do recognize these other additional facts—the growth of democracy throughout the East, the desire of Japan for peaceful economic development, the lessening of her fear of the West, her hope for American business co-operation, and the intelligence of her

statesmen, together with the existing friendliness of the Chinese toward America, and the sympathetic interest of Americans in the political and social progress of China. These realities do not insure peace, but it is by utilizing such realities, too often overlooked as matters of mere sentiment, that a cool-headed but idealistic statesmanship may succeed in getting us over the rough places in our present relations, and building a broad highway of mutual understanding and respect over which the peoples of the future shall travel. Is such a program a mere counsel of perfection? Not unless democracy is a failure. The new-old world of the Pacific summons us to a statesmanship that shall be at once bold, clear-sighted, idealistic, democratic. The failure of the old, narrow *Realpolitik*, that saw but a part of the realities, is being written today in letters of blood on the battlefields of Europe; shall not America and the Orient tomorrow write in letters of burning truth across the rainbow arch of the Pacific the success of a new, broad *Realpolitik* that shall take account of all the realities?